

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 041449Z JUN 75

FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1148

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PONTA DELGADA 174

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MEAGR, POP

SUBJECT: LISBON AGRICULTURAL POLICIES PRODUCE DISCONTENT
IN AZORES

1. MAY 12 CENTRAL GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHMENT OF MAXIMUM PRICES WHICH AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS MAY RECEIVE FOR THEIR PRODUCTS IS PROVOKING SERIOUS DISCONTENT AMONG AZOREAN RURAL WORKERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE ENGAGED IN DAIRYING AND CATTLE RAISING. DISSATISFACTION CENTERS ON FACT THAT MAXIMUM PRICES FOR AZOREAN MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS AVERAGE 20 PER CENT BELOW THOSE ALLOWABLE ON CONTINENT AND MADEIRA. AZOREANS CLAIM THEY CAN NOT REALIZE REASONABLE RETURN UNDER NEW PRICES SCHEDULE, PARTICULARLY SINCE THEY FORCED PAY HIGHER PRICES WORK SUCH INPUTS AS FERTILIZER AND RATION SUPPLEMENTS THAN CONTINENT AS PRODUCERS.

2. MOST DRAMATIC MANIFESTATION DISCONTENT TO DATE OCCURRED NIGHT OF MAY 29 WHEN CALF HUNG IN MINICIPAL CATTLE AUCTION YARD. SIGNS PINNED TO ANIMAL READ "FUTURE OF AZOREAN CATTLE" AND "GOVERNOR IS NEXT" (GOVERNOR ANTONIO BORGES COUTINHO. A LEFTIST). WE INFORMED THAT MAJOR PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION TO PROTEST CURRENT POLICY TO TAKE PLACE FRIDAY, JUNE 6.

3. COMMENT: AZOREANS GENERALLY BELIEVE THAT PRESENT UNDER
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DEVELOPMENT AND IMBALANCES OF ISLAND ECONOMY DUE TO DIS-

CRIMINARY AND EXPLOITATIVE ECONOMIC POLICIES OF CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT. CURRENT REGIME HAS BLAMED THESE CONDITIONS ON
FORMER GOVERNMENT AND PROMISED THAT THEY WILL BE CORRECTED.
NEW LISBON PRICE POLICY DAMAGES CREDIBILITY THIS POSITION
WHILE LENDING VALIDITY TO SEPARATIST CLAIM THAT ONLY IN IN-
DEPENDENT AZORES CAN AZOREAN INTERESTS BE ADEQUATELY PROTECTED.
DISPUTE IS ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE OF
CATTLE RAISING AND DAIRYING TO ISLAND ECONOMY ("ESTIMATED
70 PER CENT OF POPULATION DERIVES INCOME DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY
FROM THESE ACTIVITIES") SKILLFUL EXPLOITATION OF CURRENT RURAL
DISCONTENT MAY ALLOW FLA TO OBTAIN SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT AMONG
AZOREAN WORKING CLASSES WHICH SO FAR HAVE NOT BECOME DIRECTLY
INVOLVED IN SEPARATE ISSUE.

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